



Bridget Fleming
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FLEMING AMENDS THE SUFFOLK COUNTY CHARTER TO STRENGTHEN THE BOARD OF ETHICS



CAPTION: At the April 25th General Meeting in Hauppauge, members of the Legislature presented a proclamation.

At the April 25th General Meeting of the Suffolk County Legislature, members of the legislative body voted to approve Introductory Resolution 2083-2016, an amendment to the laws governing the Board of Ethics, which was introduced by Bridget Fleming to improve and strengthen the operations of the Board. The law was amended to ensure that the Legislature's desire for transparency and the goal of uncovering conflicts of interest by public officials is carried out by the Board of Ethics.

The amendment comes after a Newsday reporter made a Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) request in 2016 for a financial disclosure statement, which was denied by the Board of Ethics. Prior to the amendment, in October of last year the Board of Ethics

appeared before the Ways and Means Committee, which is Chaired by Legislator Fleming, and explained to the Committee their processes and procedures for releasing financial disclosure statements, and their reason for denying the FOIL request made by Newsday. It was at that meeting that Legislator Fleming indicated that she would be looking to make changes to the law to make information more accessible to the public.

“Public access to financial disclosure statements of policymakers is important to transparency in government. If the public finds it difficult to obtain this information that they are entitled to, we must make changes to ensure that it is more easily accessible” said Bridget Fleming.

Fleming, who has made government accountability one of her top priorities, introduced the following changes in her legislation:

1. The FOIL appeals officer in the Department of Law will now serve as the FOIL appeals officer for the Board of Ethics.
2. In the event that the Board receives a complaint of misconduct in a form or format that is not acceptable to the Board, a staff member must notify the complainant of the defect and advise the complainant of the proper form and procedures for lodging a complaint.
3. Financial disclosure statements filed with the Board of Ethics are not to be deemed confidential.
4. Financial disclosure statements are to be made available upon written request, and those requests should be fulfilled within ten business days.